

800-10 FILLING COUNCIL VACANCIES POLICY & PROCEDURE

- 1.0 PURPOSE:** To establish policy and procedures for filling a Council vacancy that is consistent with State law.
- 2.0 ORGANIZATIONS AFFECTED:** City Council
- 3.0 REFERENCES:** RCW 42.12, RCW 42.30, RCW 35A.12
- 4.0 POLICY:**
 - 4.1 A Council position shall be officially declared vacant upon resignation, recall, forfeiture, or death of a Council member, or for any other reason provided in RCW 42.12.
 - 4.2 The Council, by majority vote, shall appoint a qualified person to fill the vacancy in the Council.
 - 4.2.1 The appointee shall serve on the Council until such time as a person is elected and certified to fill the vacancy for the remainder of the unexpired term at the next regular municipal election.
 - 4.3 Candidates for a Council vacancy must:
 - 4.3.1 Be a registered voter of the City of Renton.
 - 4.3.2 Have residency within the corporate city limits of Renton at least one year immediately prior to consideration for the vacancy.
 - 4.4 A person shall be considered for filling the vacancy by submitting a letter of interest by the specified date and time. Additional materials outlining the person's interests and qualifications may also be submitted.
 - 4.5 Candidates' submitted materials shall be made available in the City Clerk's office for inspection by the public.
 - 4.6 Candidates may obtain letters of support from individuals or organizations and present the letters with the letter of interest.
 - 4.7 The City Clerk shall arrange for all announcements, interviews, and meetings pertaining to a Council vacancy to be made public by publishing a notice in a local newspaper of general circulation. Notice shall also be provided to each local radio and/or television station, which has on file with the city, a written request to be notified. Notice of any special meetings scheduled must be publicized 24 hours prior to the meeting and must specify the time, place, and purpose of the meeting.

The requirements above do not preclude the continuation of a publicized meeting to a time certain.

- 4.8 Interviews of selected candidates desiring to fill the vacant Council position shall be conducted in open session in Council Chambers during a Committee of the Whole meeting on the regularly scheduled night. Minutes of the meeting must be kept in order for the meeting to meet all of the requirements of the Open Public Meetings Act.

5.0 DEFINITIONS: N/A

6.0 PROCEDURE:

- 6.1 If, for any reason, a vacancy in the Council occurs, the Mayor shall officially acknowledge the vacancy at the next regularly scheduled Council meeting. If a resignation, forfeiture, or recall of a Council position occurs during a Council meeting, official acknowledgement of the vacancy by the Mayor may take place in the same meeting.
- 6.1.1 After officially acknowledging a vacancy on the Council, the Mayor shall request and encourage all qualified persons who desire to be appointed to the vacant position to submit a letter of interest to the City Clerk. The Mayor shall also indicate that additional materials outlining the person's interests and qualifications, and letters of support from individuals or organizations, may also be submitted.
- 6.1.2 Within two weeks of the acknowledgment of the vacancy, the remaining Council members shall, at a Council meeting: 1) establish a date and time by which letters and information must be submitted to the City Clerk; and 2) establish a date and time for Committee of the Whole for review of the submitted materials.
- 6.1.3 The day immediately following the Council meeting in which the Council establishes a schedule for the submission of applications and the review of materials submitted, the City Clerk shall provide a legal announcement to the local media that:
- a. Advertises the vacancy.
 - b. Requests qualified persons desiring to be appointed to the vacant position submit letters of interest and indicates that additional information may be submitted as outlined in 6.1.1.

- c. Lists the requirements and deadlines candidates must meet to be considered for the Council position.
- d. Gives notice of the Committee of the Whole when Council will review the materials submitted.

6.1.4 The City Clerk shall prepare a letters of interest packet for each Council member and the Mayor consisting of candidates' submitted materials. Packets may also contain written endorsements, interview questions, and other material as requested.

6.1.5 After receiving the packets, the Council shall meet in open session in Council Chambers for Committee of the Whole to review and debate the qualifications of the candidates, with no public comment to be taken.

6.1.6 At the next regular Council meeting following completion of review and debate of candidate materials, Council shall select by majority vote either a candidate as the new council member, or a slate of candidates to be interviewed at the next Committee of the Whole meeting. If a new candidate is selected, the City Clerk shall notify the candidates that a selection has been made and the interview process is cancelled. If the new council member has been selected under this subsection, the rest of this policy is inapplicable.

6.1.7 If council selects candidates for interview, the City Clerk shall personally notify each candidate of the date, time, and place of the interviews.

6.2 Each candidate will be interviewed at a Committee of the Whole meeting to be held in Council Chambers.

6.2.1 Each candidate's interview shall not exceed 30 minutes in length and shall consist of three steps:

- a. A formal presentation of credentials by the candidate.
- b. A set of preselected questions approved by the Council that the candidate must respond to. Each candidate must respond to the same set of questions.
- c. An informal question/answer period in which Council members may ask miscellaneous questions.

- 6.2.2 Candidates' order of appearance at the interview shall be pre-determined by Council.
- 6.2.3 The chair may limit the length of each candidate's interview if the number of candidates exceeds six.
- 6.2.4 Upon completion of all interviews, Council members may discuss the qualifications of candidates.

6.3 After completion of the interviews and discussion during Committee of the Whole, the chair shall, at the immediately following regular Council meeting, ask for nominations.

- 6.3.1 Nominations shall be made beginning with the Council President and in order of roll call for the month.
- 6.3.2 Balloting is done by roll call vote as outlined in 6.3.1. No secret ballot is permitted.
 - a. Balloting will continue until a nominee receives a majority of four votes.
 - b. At any time during the balloting process, Council may postpone balloting until the next regularly scheduled Council meeting if a majority vote is not reached.
- 6.3.3 All interviews, discussion, nominations and votes taken by the Council shall be held during regular session.
- 6.3.4 The nominee receiving the majority vote is declared the new Council member and shall be sworn in by the City Clerk or other designated official at the next regularly scheduled Council meeting.
- 6.3.5 If the Council does not elect a new Council member within 90 days of the acknowledged vacancy, an Impasse will be declared. The Council President will submit a request to the King County Council that it appoint a qualified person to fill the vacancy. The names of the nominees considered by the Council will be sent to the King County Council with the request.
- 6.3.6 If the Council does not elect a new Council member within 90 days of the declared vacancy, the King County Council shall make the selection within 180 days of the acknowledged vacancy.